



The Best Friend

I am the best friend I have got;
I like to sit with Me;
I like to sit and tell Myself things
confidentially.
I often stop and ask Me if I shouldn't
or if I should,
And find that My advice is always
pretty good.

I never got acquainted with Myself
till here of late,
Just found Myself a bully chum!
Since then it's simply great.
I talk with Me; I walk with Me; I
show Me right from wrong;
And really, now, you'd be surprised
how well we get along.

I never try to cheat Myself; I'm
honest as can be;
No matter what may come and go,
I'm on the square with Me.
It's great to have a pal—that is, one
that is all your own;
To be such company for yourself
you're never left alone.

You'll try to shun the masses, and
you'll think the crowd a joke;
If you treat yourself one-half as
good as you treat other folk;
I've made a study of Myself; have
compared Me with quite a lot,
To reach this one conclusion—I'm
the best friend I have got.
—W. S. Meagher, in Blue Jacket.

The Dark Days

The tasks of the housewife vary with the seasons, and now that the worries of the summer are past, we turn to the comforts of the indoor life. The excessive heat of the past summer has left too many of us feeling debilitated and with little energy, and we feel that we lost something of the summer's pleasures because of the remorseless heat. We should try to make up for it in the social life of the winter season. It is not necessary, to really enjoy our friends, that we go to great expense, or worry ourselves with "much serving." If we could only make up our minds to meet as often as possible, and let the "entertaining" take care of itself, I am sure that life would be more delightful to every one of us. Why must we eat, if we gather at the house of a friend for a few hours? Or if we must be "served refreshments," why must the menu be elaborate? A sandwich and a cup of tea; or a platter of fruit to be taken from or left, as we choose, is as much as any one could ask. By thus doing, we could have our hostess with us all the time, and if we are the right kind of people, she will be glad to see us, and feel refreshed by the visit. The mental and social natures of most women starve more than the physical, and this is beginning to be realized and planned for. An old-time custom with our mothers and grandmothers was, when they knew the work pressed heavily on the shoulders of some neighbor, and knew that she could not obtain the necessary help, to get together and help her out. Sewing circles are a good thing, if only a few congenial friends take hold of the work basket and the machine and try in earnest to help out, rather than for a crowd to gather and spend the afternoon gossiping and visiting, one with another, expecting a big "tea," or supper as a reward for our goodly intentions. Many old-time customs may be profitably revived. We live too much alone, and we starve our social

natures to stuff our stomachs. Let us reform.

Washing Flannels

It is now "flannel" time, and a great many people do not know how to wash flannel garments so they will remain soft and not shrink. They should be washed on a bright day and dried as quickly as possible. Before wetting them, shake all the dust and lint out of them. Have prepared two tubs of water as hot as the hand can bear comfortably, and put enough dissolved soap, or some good washing powder, in one to make a strong suds, allowing to every three gallons of water one tablespoonful of borax or two tablespoonfuls of household ammonia. The borax, however, is best, and just as inexpensive; ammonia is apt to leave a yellow tinge; put the flannels into the suds, and wash by sopping up and down, squeezing and punching, rather than rubbing. When the water shows that the dirt has come out, squeeze the garment or piece out as dry as possible (do not wring), and put into the second tub, which must be as hot as the suds. Repeat the squeezing, pounding and sopping about until the piece is clean, then put it into another tub of clear water of the same temperature; to this last, a little bluing may be added before putting in the flannel. After sozzling about in this water to get out the remnant of the soap, put the flannel through the wringer and dry in the open air. Before quite dry, take off the line, fold and pack in a clean cloth and iron as soon as possible with a moderately hot iron.

For colored flannels, have fresh, hot suds, and proceed as you did with the white ones, always having the temperature of each tub of water the same. Some people object to hanging the flannels in the sunshine, as they should not dry in heat; but the heat from now on in the sunshine will not hurt the finest flannels. Yellow soap must not be used on flannels, because yellow soap contains resin, and this is damaging to flannel or woolen goods. It will pay to use a good white soap, and there are plenty of them on the market very cheap.

For the Sewing Room

For marking, tailors use a hard chalk which gives a distinct line that does not so readily rub off in handling, as the soft chalk used in the school room. Ask for tailor's chalk when you go to buy.

In making garments for the growing child, cut the sleeves and waist as long as possible, regardless of cuffs and belt. When making up, set the cuff on the bottom of the sleeve, and set the belt on the bottom of the waist; when the child grows, or the goods shrink, the cuffs may be ripped off and slipped down to the end of the sleeve, and in like manner the belt may be set down on the bottom of the waist.

Make generous seams under and over the arms, and generous hems on the closing at the back. Make the button holes in a fly and set under the hem, and thus the goods is not damaged, and the waist can be widened, as well as lengthened, if necessary.

Have plenty of tucks in the little skirts, and turn in the ends of the belt, stitching with a fine needle and fine thread. Do not buy coarse, sleazy muslins, but get the soft,

starchless kind that will both wear and wash well. Do not use too much openwork embroidery, or the coarse, cheap laces that look well in the store, but are ruined as soon as sent to the laundry.

Where the materials are not inclined to fray at the cut edges, pinking is a quick, neat finish for the seams, and is much neater than felling or French seaming. Binding is apt to pucker the edges and make them bulky. A pair of sharp scissors are necessary for the pinking.

For the underskirts, adjust the fullness to the figure by machine stitched side plaits, and instead of strings, tapes or buttons, use the rust-proof hooks and eyes. Do not buy muslin underwear that has button-hole embroidery finish, for unless well done, it soon gets ragged. A good way is to stitch the buttonholing on the machine and thus strengthen the edge.

Cleaning Garments

Almost any stain can be removed if rubbed at once with a mixture of equal parts of ammonia, alcohol and water; after cleaning, brush and dry, and lay on the pressing table or board, tacking down the plaits or folds with a very fine thread; then cover the skirt with a piece of dark woolen goods, dampened thoroughly, but not wet, and press with a moderately hot flat iron. There is a difference between pressing and ironing. The pressing is done with an iron which will not scorch, and the iron is moved slowly over the goods, pressing as heavily as necessary as the iron is moved.

A brush should not be used for cleaning the dust from silk, as the bristles will in time cut the fabric. Wipe with a piece of velvet; this will remove the dust without injuring the silk. Silk or ruffled skirts should be hung away upside down, as this prevents the sagging of the skirt from the weight of the ruffles, and keeps the ruffles from drooping.

Wash frocks should be put into boxes, trunks or drawers, as in hanging them up, they become stringy, out of shape, and quickly lose their freshness.

When coming in from the street, shake the garments well before hanging away, and if there are any mud-splashes on them, put where it will get thoroughly dry, then rub the dust from the material. Let the dust or dirt get perfectly dry before touching it.

Answers to Correspondents

The holes for the eyelets used for lacing openings in garments are first made with a stiletto, or embroidery punch, which leaves a perfectly round hole. Outline the hole with a running stitch far enough into the material to keep it firm, and mark the line or depth for the buttonholing, which should cover the running, or staying stitches.

The skirt which closes in front, or to one side should be finished with a placket and hooks and eyes, or with loops for the hooks. In the serge skirt, place a narrow strip of canvas along each edge of the opening, with the edge of the canvas three-eighths of an inch from the edge of the material; turn the edge of the material back on the canvas and catch it into position with small stitches; stitch the edge as desired, and then sew

on the hooks and eyes; cover the canvas on the right hand side with facing of silk; sew an underlap of material an inch and a half wide, finished, to the left side edge, and bind the raw edge of the lap with seam binding. A few lessons from a good dressmaker would make things clear.

It is a difficult matter for one person alone to "even" the bottom of a skirt. The skirt should be finished, all but the bottom, and if the figure varies a little from the average proportions, attention must be paid to having the bottom even. Put the skirt on, and stand on the table, or some elevation, and let some one measure with a tape line, or yard stick, the number of inches wanted from the floor, marking the skirt with small pins or a bit of tailor's chalk. After it is measured, take the skirt off and turn up the bottom to the line of pins or chalk marks, baste it with rather close stitches, close to the line of the fold, then at the top of the hem; try it on again, and if it hangs perfectly, finish the hem with stitching, or if it is to be faced, trim off the unevenness and face neatly.

Query Box

A Correction—Mrs. A., who sent in the cough (not "dough") remedy recipe, published in the Home Department of October 13th, makes the following correction: "Use one-half pound, instead of one-half ounce, of licorice root in the recipe. Dose, one to one-and-a-half teaspoonfuls, according to age." She recommends it highly.

Mrs. S. K.—Silver that has become blackened should be cleaned by boiling about half an hour in two quarts of water containing two tablespoonfuls of sal soda.

Elsie M.—A pinch of salt should be added to the whites of eggs when beating, as this causes the mass to stiffen quicker and stand better.

J. M.—For the damp boots, use blacking to which a few drops of paraffine oil (not wax) have been added; this will give a quick polish, and prevent cracking of the leather.

"Glazier"—To perforate the glass, bank it with a wad of putty where you want the hole; make a hole in the putty down to the glass of the size wanted; into the hole pour hot lead, and the piece will drop out.

Mrs. L. J.—All the vinegars used for flavoring are easily made by steeping the aromatic herbs in good vinegar until strong enough for use. Mint, tarragon, and other leaves in the dried state can be purchased at the drug-store, or the market stalls fresh in their season. They are used to flavor sauces, and as appetizers.

Roof and Floor

Answering a reader's request for information, we give the following, furnished us by one who knows:

For painting a felt roof, take gas tar, 100 pounds; lime, 15 pounds; grind the lime fine and sift it, but do not slack. Boil the tar, adding the lime slowly to prevent boiling over; when thoroughly mixed, apply to the felt while still very hot. The lime and tar form a chemical combination that is reasonably fire-proof, makes a smooth, glazed roof, and will not "run" in the hot sunshine.

For a cellar floor, use sifted coal ashes, five parts, and Portland cement, one part; mix well in a box with water enough to make a good mortar, and work quickly; spread this over the bottom of the cellar about two inches thick, or even thicker, and rub down smooth and solid with wooden blocks, and when smooth and even, finish with a coat made of equal parts of Portland cement and clean, sharp sand, mixing as wanted, as it sets very quickly, to a thin mortar with water, and